

Message Text

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61

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 ABF-01 /017 W

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R 221241Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8820

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

UNCLAS CARACAS 5319

DEPARTMENT FOR ARA/MGT-ACKERMAN AND A/SY/FO FROM RSO
PANAMA FOR RSS FROM RSO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ASEC

SUBJ: FUNDS FOR VENEZUELAN NATIONAL GUARD

1. THOUGH IT MAY BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE VENEZUELAN GOVERNMENT TO FURNISH NATIONAL GUARDSMEN TO AFFORD PROTECTION FOR THE UNITED STATES CHANCERY, THE GUARD SERVICE HAS NEVER BE SATISFACTORY AND PROBLEMS RELATING TO THE GUARDS' RAPID TURNOVER, UNPROFESSIONALISM, AND ABSENTEEISM ARE ON THE INCREASE. IT IS PROVING MOST DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN A MINIMUM CONTINGENT OF EIGHT NATIONAL GUARDSMEN, AND IT HAS NOT BEEN INFREQUENT WHEN THE CHANCERY FOUND ITSELF WITH ONLY FOUR GUARDSMEN.

2. THE COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE NATIONAL GUARD HAS INDICATED THAT HE IS UNABLE TO MAINTAIN A GOOD CONTINGENT AT THE EMBASSY BECAUSE HE HAS NO INDUCEMENT TO OFFER THEM. IN OTHER WORDS, HE WAS REFERRING TO THE LOCAL PRACTICE THAT GUARDSMEN ARE PAID BS. 16.00 (\$4.74) DAILY FOR FOOD AND OTHER ITEMS BY AMERICAN AND VENEZUELAN COMPANIES WHO HAVE ASKED FOR OR WHO ARE AFFORDED PROTECTION; AND THE EMBASSY IS THE ONLY ORGANIZATION NOT DOING SO.

3. THE EIGHT GUARDS ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY NOW ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SECURITY OF THE EMBASSY, AND THIS NUMBER IS THE ABSOLUTE MINIMUM FOR EFFICIENT OPERATION. IF ADDITIONAL CUTS OR ABSENTEEISM ARE CONTINUED BY THE NATIONAL GUARD, THE EMBASSY
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MAY HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO HIRE PRIVATE CONTRACT GUARDS AT

APPROXIMATELY \$5,420 ANNUALLY FOR EACH EIGHT-HOUR GUARD POSITION.
IN ORDER TO COMPLY WITH LOCAL PRACTICE AND TO GUARANTEE GOOD
SECURITY, EMBASSY REQUESTS THAT AN ANNUAL ALLOTMENT OF \$11,000
BE AUTHORIZED SOONEST TO MAKE "FOOD" PAYMENT FOR NATIONAL GUARDS-
MEN. THE AMBASSADOR ENDORSES PROPOSAL. ALSO, FUNDS NEEDED HAVE
BE INCLUDED IN THE POST'S BUDGET AND FINANCIAL PLANS.
SHLAUDEMAM

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 MAY 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975CARACA05319
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750180-0374
From: CARACAS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750524/aaaaavmp.tel
Line Count: 68
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 JUL 2003 by SilvaL0>; APPROVED <30 JAN 2004 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FUNDS FOR VENEZUELAN NATIONAL GUARD
TAGS: ASEC
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006